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Intelligence Brief

RICE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Basic Intelligence

W A R N I N G

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GROUP 1

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

RICE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

The problems of the South Vietnamese government in maintaining rice production and controlling its distribution under the impact of the Viet Cong insurgency reflect the primary importance of rice as the country's chief food staple. Traditionally, rice also has been an important earner of foreign exchange, second only to natural rubber, but insecurity in the rice-growing areas and increased demand at home have reduced exports since 1963. In 1965 South Vietnam began importing rice. Estimates of the area under rice cultivation and the total yield for the crop years 1960-61 through 1964-65 are tabulated below:

<u>Rice-crop Year*</u>	<u>Area Cultivated</u> (1,000 hectares)	<u>Production</u> (1,000 metric tons)
1960-61	2,318	4,955
1961-62	2,353	4,607
1962-63	2,479	5,205
1963-64	2,538	5,327
1964-65	2,562	5,185

* The rice-crop year begins 1 June of one year and ends 30 May of the next. The statistics are from the recently received USOM (Vietnam) publication, Annual Statistical Bulletin, Saigon, 1965.

Lacking proper water control to effect modern irrigation, the Vietnamese peasant is dependent upon precipitation and subsequent river flooding for rice cultivation; his activities are thus attuned to the seasonality of the tropical monsoon that prevails in South Vietnam. The major part of South Vietnam's rice comes from the "first crop" -- the crop that is planted to coincide with the advent of the summer rainy season, which usually is dominant throughout most of the country from June to early September. (The coastal area from about Nha Trang northward and its immediate hinterland is an exception to the general pattern of precipitation.) Of the country's total production for 1963-64, 91 percent came from this crop, and of this percentage 86 percent came from the Mekong Delta. Of the delta's total rice production, 97 percent came from the first crop, a percentage which emphasizes the fact that the

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Mekong Delta is basically a one-crop rice region. The major areas of rice cultivation are shown on the accompanying Map 52878, and the statistics for rice production on a provincial basis are given in the Table, following p. 3.

The first-crop rice includes many varieties that mature at different times, requiring growing periods that vary from 90 days to as many as 240 days. The months of harvest for the different varieties are shown on Map 52878. The peasant's choice of varieties of rice is predominantly the result of his adaptation to his environment. In Long An Province he plants fast-maturing (early) rice in his relatively high fields because water drains easily from them; slower maturing rice in these rapidly drained fields might be endangered by lack of water near the end of the rainy season. A more notable example of adaptation to the environment is the use of "floating rice" (red "Java" rice) in the part of the Mekong Delta that adjoins the Cambodian border. The deep floods that are characteristic of this area would submerge and destroy ordinary rice, but the growth of the "floating rice" (which may grow 10 to 18 feet long) keeps pace with the normally gradual flooding of the Mekong River.

Second crops of rice in South Vietnam are largely restricted to the part of the coastal area that receives both the autumn rains of the northeast monsoon (Hué receives over 20 inches of rainfall monthly from September through November) and the swollen waters of the rivers whose mountainous headwater areas receive the summer rains of the southwest monsoon. Of the total rice production of 902,520 metric tons for the coastal lowlands in 1963-64, 302,290 metric tons, roughly 33 percent, were derived from the second crop. This contrasts strongly with production in the Mekong Delta, where only 3 percent of the total rice yield comes from the second crop.

Upland rice, or dry rice, is grown chiefly by the tribal peoples in the highlands. Its cultivation is an integral part of the slash-and-burn agriculture practiced by the tribes, a primitive system of agriculture that is adapted to the steep wooded slopes, generally poor soil, and complete dependence upon precipitation for the water needed for plant growth. The yield of dry rice per hectare of cultivated land is generally much lower than that of irrigated rice (see Table). Dry rice is planted at the beginning of the summer rains; it is harvested in the different mountain provinces at the various times indicated on Map 52878.

In contrast to the Mekong Delta, which is a rice-surplus area, the central lowlands of Vietnam have traditionally been a rice-deficit area dependent on the delta for the extra rice that is needed. Rice moves from the producing areas of the delta to Saigon and is then shipped to the central lowlands. Shipments of rice from Saigon to these deficit areas during the last 5 years are as follows:

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

<u>Year</u>	<u>Metric Tons of Rice</u>
1960	269,300
1961	279,100
1962	310,700
1963	327,300
1964	300,400

During 1965 the deficiency in the central lowlands has been more acute because the Viet Cong has confiscated much of the rice, reportedly as much as 75 percent of the crop in the more fertile areas of Phu Yen Province.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

E-2 - RICE AND RICE PADDY

c - AREA CULTIVATED AND PRODUCTION, BY PROVINCE

	Area cultivated (1,000 ha)			Production (1,000 m. tons)			Field per hectare (Metric tons)		
	1962/53	1963/64r	1964/65	1962/63	1963/64r	1964/65	1962/63	1963/64r	1964/65
Viet-Nam, Total	2,479	2,538	2,562	5,205	5,327	5,185	2.1	2.1	2.0
South Viet-Nam	1,925	1,965	1,959	4,297	4,364	4,205	2.2	2.2	2.1
Ba-Xuyen	260	266	175	523	592	431	2.0	2.2	2.5
An-Giang	258	263	179	576	545	420	2.2	2.1	2.3
Kien-Giang	114	127	132	264	282	310	2.3	2.2	2.4
Vinh-Binh	168	171	179	362	359	291	2.2	2.1	1.6
Phong-Dinh	110	111	116	283	291	279	2.6	2.6	2.4
Bac-Lieu	a/	a/	92	a/	a/	262	a/	a/	2.8
An-Xuyen	133	112	103	276	254	253	2.1	2.3	2.5
Dinh-Tuong	158	167	105	360	415	234	2.3	2.2	2.2
Long-An	143	134	98	425	334	231	3.0	2.5	2.4
Chuong-Thien	118	125	120	234	205	227	2.0	2.0	1.9
Chau-Doc	a/	a/	105	a/	a/	204	a/	a/	1.9
Kien-Hoa	107	116	106	196	215	186	1.8	1.9	1.8
Vinh-Long	92	96	92	219	222	154	2.4	2.3	1.7
Gia-Dinh	53	52	59	141	147	148	2.7	2.8	2.5
Kien-Phong	78	87	72	165	195	145	2.1	2.2	2.0
Go-Cong	a/	a/	48	a/	a/	88	a/	a/	1.9
Hau-Nghia	a/	a/	41	a/	a/	78	a/	a/	1.9
Tay-Ninh	35	40	35	84	84	76	2.4	2.1	2.1
Binh-Duong	25	23	20	56	53	47	2.3	2.3	2.3
Bien-Hoa	22	24	22	52	50	43	2.4	2.1	2.0
Phuoc-Tuy	10	8	12	23	21	28	2.5	2.6	2.4
Kien-Tuong	14	11	16	24	15	27	1.7	1.4	1.7
Binh-Tuy	8	9	9	12	13	14	1.4	1.4	1.4
Other b/	19	23	23	22	32	29	1.2	1.4	1.3
Central Lowlands	493	501	533	853	902	911	1.7	1.8	1.7
Binh-Dinh	99	110	126	174	183	226	1.8	1.7	1.8
Quang-Ngai	79	91	84	135	185	141	1.7	2.0	1.7
Quang-Nam	55	54	56	76	106	111	1.4	2.0	2.0
Thua-Thien	65	67	65	112	109	109	1.7	1.7	1.7
Phu-Yen	38	35	44	105	76	89	2.7	2.2	2.0
Quang-Tin	67	60	70	91	95	66	1.4	1.6	0.9
Khanh-Hoa	37	35	30	78	68	55	2.1	1.9	1.8
Quang-Tri	26	24	26	29	30	43	1.1	1.2	1.7
Binh-Thuan	11	12	16	22	23	40	2.0	1.9	2.5
Ninh-Thuan	16	13	16	31	27	31	1.9	2.0	1.9
Central Highlands	61	72	70	55	61	69	0.9	0.8	1.0
Darlac	12	25	25	11	20	25	0.9	0.8	1.0
Pleiku	15	19	16	12	19	16	0.8	1.0	1.0
Kontum	13	12	13	12	8	12	0.9	0.7	1.0
Lam-Dong	8	6	7	8	6	7	1.0	1.0	1.0
Tuyen-Duc	2	2	2	2	3	4	1.5	1.2	1.6
Phu-Bon	5	3	3	6	2	3	0.9	0.8	0.9
Quang-Duc	6	4	4	4	2	2	0.6	0.6	0.6

a/ New provinces carved out during 1963-1964 (see table A-1c)

b/ Includes five provinces: Phuoc-Thanh, Phuoc-Long, Long-Khanh, Binh-Long and Con-Son.

Table reproduced from Annual Statistical Bulletin, United States Operations Mission to Vietnam; Sec E, "Agriculture"; Saigon, August 1965. The heading "Viet-Nam, Total" refers to the South Viet-Nam, which includes "South Viet-Nam" refers to the Mekong Delta area.

Source: Agricultural Calendar of Vietnam, 1964;
Ministry of Rural Affairs Vietnam

3,6 3rd lunar, 6th lunar month, etc.



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GEOGRAPHY DIVISION REQUEST FOR GRAPHICS

TO: CHIEF, CARTOGRAPHY DIVISION

20 December 1965

Date

Check whether SENSITIVE

Yes

X

No

Sanitized Title if above is Yes: _____

Actual Title: Major Areas of Rice Production and Harvest Months

Map No.

52878

Classification: Unclassified

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Number of Copies: Standard Distrib.

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GD Project No.: 6122 66C

GD's Requester: Self-initiated

GD Analyst and Branch: [REDACTED]

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Remarks: Project was suggested by Director/BI. [REDACTED] Cartography

Division, agreed that maps would be completed in time to disseminate study no
later than first week of January.

Date Approved: 20 Dec 65

TL

SA/CH/GD/BI

Instructions: To be made up in triplicate: Two copies to CD/BI, one of which will be returned to OCH/GD with map number. The third copy to be held in OCH/GD until the second is returned; the third copy with map number added to be sent to the GD Branch requesting graphics.

GROUP I

Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

GEOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ACTIVITY NOTICE	
TO:	SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, OBI Director, OBI 16 Dec 65
THROUGH:	CHIEF, GEOGRAPHY DIVISION, OBI OBI
FROM:	CHIEF, Far East/Pacific Branch, GD/BI
SUBJECT:	GEOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ACTIVITY NOTICE
1. SUBJECT	
Rice in South Vietnam	
2. PROBLEM	
Currently, an all-out effort is being made by the South Vietnam government as well as the Viet Cong to collect the rice harvest as it ripens in the various provinces. A brief paper, with a slant toward this economic warfare, will be prepared to describe rice culture in South Vietnam. The paper will indicate the varieties of rice grown and when they ripen, and will show rice yields by provinces in past years.	
3. NAME OF REQUESTER	4. NAME OF D/GG ANALYST
Self-initiated	SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, OBI 25X1A
5. COORDINATION WITH OTHER OFFICES	
Required map from Cartography	
6. DUE DATE	7. PROJECT NUMBER
ASAP	6132266 C
8. REMARKS:	
The project was suggested by Director, OBI. It should have wide reader interest.	
25X1A	